

# Quick Strokes

Subscription, per year \$10  
In California \$10.60

Now officially the organ of the Dvorak International Federation, issued in June, September, December, and March. This is No. 1 of Vol. X, Whole Number 33.

SUMMER, 1982

## Blackburn at the keyboard, Russell at the lectern at World Futurist General Assembly

The Dvorak International Federation has rented a booth at the World Futurist General Assembly to be held at the Sheraton Washington Hotel, Washington, D.C., from the 18th to the 22nd of July, 1982. Barbara Blackburn, the world champion of alphanumeric keyboard operators, will demonstrate her skill at a Dvorak-arranged word-processing unit.

A panel discussion on the better arrangement, already a phenomenon of the present, will be led by Virginia deGanahl Russell, of Brandon, Vermont, president of the federation.

The theme of the assembly is Communications and the Future. The main address is by Buckminster Fuller.

As reported in the April *Quick Strokes*, a paper on alternative keying by Waldo Boyd, of Geyserville, California is to be published among the proceedings. Now, it may also be presented orally at the panel session. Boyd, well known as a magazine writer, does his writing at a Dvorak-arranged TRS-80 computer.

The society describes its general assemblies as large, multi-disciplinary convocations that provide unique occasions to hear frontier thinkers and doers. Its organ, *The Futurist*, is a journal of forecasts, trends, and ideas about the future. Mail address, World Future Society, Postoffice Box 30369, Bethesda Branch, Washington, D.C. 20014.

## Draft proposed alternative keyboard arrangement standard goes to Board of Standards Review

The May, 1982, meeting of American National Standards Working Group X4DSK was a windup in both senses — that of a ball of twine which has made its mark as a chalkline and that of a coiled spring before its release.

The business before the group was to respond to comments accompanying negative ballots from X4DSK's parent, American National Standards Committee X3 (information processing). There were only five of these, out of a total of 38 ballots cast, two abstentions, and three not voting.

Thus, the draft proposal for the alternative keyboard arrangement standard has a consensus of the decisive committee. Nevertheless, each of the negative comments had to be responded to and the negative voters have to have their chance for a counterresponse. This is according to the rules of the publisher of American National standards, the American National Standards Institute, 1430 Broadway, New York.

The conventional portion of the keyboard arrangement standard proposal goes to the Board of Standards Review in June, 1982. That draft is designated as BSR X3.23. The alternative draft will reach BSR in July.

Neither the decisive committee, which is X3, nor the BSR is concerned with the relative merits of conventional and alternative keying. The X3 committee assigned the task of drawing up proposals to two committees, X3V1 for conventional arrangements for various sets of characters and X4DSK for alternative arrangements for the same sets, because they had found that both arrangements were poorly defined.

The wide variety of variants of the conventional arrangement and the several for what is generically known as "the Dvorak" that have been in use made for difficulty in ordering, manufacturing, and shipping. It is thought that the availability of a published standard will save time and trouble, even if the purchasing agent wants some small variation from the standard.

The X4DSK meeting was held in a room that had been kindly provided by the management of the Dysan Corporation in Santa Clara, California. Present were members Harriet Davis, Phil Davis, Claude Kagan, Albert Kolb, Brad J. Lessley, Michael

McNeil, and Virginia Russell and Observers Waldo Boyd and David Pressman. Kagan, from New Jersey, and Russell, from Vermont, had crossed the continent for this one-day meeting. L. G. Schear, a member residing in Florida, participated by telephone.

## An honest treatment of Dvorak keying

It is refreshing to turn pages in Carroll Blanchard's *Word Processing: Keyboards, Kinesthesia & Women*. The real neat part — the part about the alternative keyboard arrangement and the Dvorak movement — is not hidden. Right at the beginning, by way of frontispiece, on page iv, is a page with the headline "What the world needs now" and the answer, diagrammed and illustrated!

In Section 1 (of three), on pages numbered K79 to K100, is the reason why the conventional arrangement, now touted as "familiar", never does become very much of a buddy to the operator, and that is followed by a condensed exposition of the reason why the alternative arrangement works so well with, and not against, the operator.

In the same subsection, headed "Keyboard Reform, Dvorak-ASK," is material that Blanchard has lifted, with credit, from Shirley Boes Neill's article in *Kappan* for June, 1980. Here, much credit goes where much is due, not to every stalwart of the Dvorak movement but at least to some in Portland and Salem, Oregon, and in Sacramento and Carmel, California.

The publisher of WP: K, K & W is Educators — Project IV, 178 Ottawa St., Lake George, New York 12845. The price is \$18.75.

## Dvorak easier for Messrs. Hunt & Peck?

W. O. Enderle, of Elgin, Arizona, is interested in modifying his TRS-80 No. III for Dvorak, just to see if it types faster on a hunt-and-peck basis than the 30-word pace he attained on qwerty in high school.

As soon as you have a Dvorak diagram before you, you can start drilling, on a life-sized diagram, on an imagined diagram on any surface, or internally. Do so, and when you have your Dvorak keyboard ready to go, go to it! Relief from stress will be immediately noticeable. Relabel your keytops and use them temporarily as a visual aid. You will find thirty words pretty easy to get to.

## "... remap it into Dvorak" — What does that mean?

Remapping into Dvorak means getting rid of the cumbersome conventional arrangement of characters and substituting an easy one. It means getting away from the emotional stress of an arbitrary arrangement and from the muscular tension and fatigue that accompany the stress.

See the diagram on page 3. Note the second rank of keys, from A to S. Think for a moment of the number of whole words, prepositional phrases, and easily devised sentences that you can write without leaving the home position except for a forefinger inreach.

Think of the rhythm you develop, even while you are still sight hunting, with the prevailing left, right, left, right stroking pattern. Imagine the ease, the speed, the accuracy, and the confidence that you will develop as your input becomes kinaesthetic, and your imagination will not deceive you.

The diagram shows Smith-Corona's ASK, which is a Dvorak although not everybody's Dvorak. IBM's built-in Dvorak is called Dvorak and shows the apostrophe as a downreach — better design in some opinions.

Dvorak is not hard to say. It is Duh-VOR-ock.



## Textbook cites Lekberg's "The Tyranny of Qwerty" as a model of exposition

From Tanja White, of Thaxton, Virginia, a college student with a major in nursing, comes word that an article on Dvorak keying has found a place in *Assignments in Exposition*, a college textbook. It is by Louise E. Rorabacher and Georgia Dunbar and is published by Harper & Row (1979).

The writer of the article is Charles Lekberg. The title is "The Tyranny of Qwerty", and it appeared originally in *Saturday Review Science* for October, 1972.

Lekberg did, indeed, do a good job of exposing, briefly and pointedly, the deficiencies of the conventional arrangement of characters. He pictures beginners muttering, as they do mutter, "semicolon, l, k, j, space" as they drill. What, indeed, are these characters doing in a location that is called "the home row" for good reason? What are a and s doing side by side? What, for that matter, are v, e, and d doing in the same longitudinal file? What can the other hand do while the left is perfecting syllables and words that are made up of those strokes?

Lekberg's question is "What are we typers doing about it?" What hundreds of *Saturday Review* readers did was to write to two addresses that were mentioned and thus compel us to launch *Quick Strokes*.

## Plea for keyboard efficiency goes to Oregon voters

The Official 1982 Primary Voters' Pamphlet, distributed to all registered voters by the Oregon's Secretary of State, carried the following paragraph on page 66, from information furnished by the Anderson for Governor Committee:

"6. Promote the Dvorak typing keyboard (scientifically designed — fingers move one fifteenth as much as on conventional keyboard). Every person could, and should, learn to type efficiently on the Dvorak keyboard, the very best single preparation for jobs in this computer age."

The primary election was held on May 17, 1982, and Anderson was not the winner. In another part of his statement, however, he declares his intention of participating in other campaigns yet to come. Steve Anderson, a past president of the Dvorak International Federation, does business as an attorney in Salem.

## From the Extrapolator

Greetings! I have been a Dvorak user since I purchased my Smith-Corona with their ASK keyboard in 1975. Since then, I've modified a computer keyboard for my Polymorphic Systems 8813 (actually rewired and moved keycaps).

I noted the item in *Byte-Lines* by Sol Libes in the *May Byte*. Please send info.

Ralph E. Kenyon Jr., Chester, Massachusetts

Still very much enjoy your publication. Chris Christensen, Salem, Oregon.

## From a Colorado State University student

Dear Harriet and Phil — I have two statistics classes, Advanced Calculus, Physics, and, for a break from science, a Psychology class. We have a 10-page paper to write for the latter, so my typewriter will be put to use. I wish there were room for me to leave it out all the time; it would be handy for letters, while perhaps getting attention from fellow students.

Thanks for the latest copies of *Quick Strokes*. Unfortunately the gal I was sharing them with is now off on her internship. I had asked her to be aware of the availability of the Dvorak arrangement, to see if it would be helpful in her job as an occupational therapist. I'll see if I can't get a few more OTs that live here aware if not interested.

Lenora White

## The face — Barbara's — is familiar, and so is the record

The story on Barbara Blackburn in *State Farm Year* for 1981, an annual publication which is distributed throughout the companies making up State Farm Insurance, starts off, "Barbara Blackburn flunked high school typing."

A mean thing to say? By no means! This is the point that Mrs. Blackburn herself emphasizes. Dropping conventional typing, or getting washed up or flunked out, does not condemn a student to an overcrowded nonclerical occupation.

Not if a resourceful teacher is at hand and takes an interest — somebody like the Nettie Huff who ran Huff Business College in Kansas City when Blackburn was enrolled. Huff introduced her to the Dvorak arrangement for keyboards, and Blackburn has made a living and singlehandedly raised a family, moving from job to job and plying her Dvorak skill.

Barbara stands ready, at the drop of an adequate hatful of money, to defend her title as the world's fastest *alphanumeric* keyboard operator, as recorded in the Guinness Book.

Her portrait appears again in *Golden Gate Word Processing Xchange News* for June, 1982, along with a note from her and an editor's note citing her scores — terrific!

## Richard B. Lewis

Professor Richard B. Lewis, whose death occurred on October 26, 1981, was memorialized recently at a banquet sponsored by the Richard B. Lewis Award Fund committee, which is made up of faculty, students, and alumni of California State University San Jose. A tree was planted on campus in his memory.

The award, a small one, goes to the outstanding candidate for a master's degree in the Department of Instructional Technology. The committee hopes to build it into a full scholarship.

Mary Jane, his wife for forty-five years, survives, as do two cousins. The Lewises are well remembered, as kind hosts and helpful colleagues, by others in the Dvorak movement, especially two other widows, Hermione Dvorak and Marie Parkinson.

Professor Lewis, 73 years old at the time of his death, spent his entire career at San Jose State. He retired in 1972. He was a speed demon at a two-hand Dvorak keyboard. After a stroke which he suffered in 1979, he switched to a Dvorak one-hand arrangement.

## For adapting the machine to the operator

I have been anguishing over purchasing a personal computer, because I can hardly bear the prospect of reprogramming myself from Dvorak to the Conventional keyboard. So tell, what is the practical thing to do? I am contemplating purchasing an Apple as it would be consistent with those we have here at Haverford College.

Important would be a way of sharing a computer with someone who typed in the conventional manner.

Francis D. Fisher  
Haverford, Pennsylvania

## Digital Equipment user writes

"I found out about the Dvorak keyboard some two years back, altho could not trace down the actual layout. I own a Digital Equipment Corp. LSI-11 and am desirous of obtaining the Dvorak layout and news of any application software.

"I've constructed a couple of keyboards and so am aware that it is the position-to-ASCII encoding that is the heart of the Dvorak system. I believe it would be wise to encourage software-modifiable keyboards in personal computers as a step in the direction of flexibility and customizability especially for non-English users. Color me interested."

Robert J. Williams  
Hollywood, California



## Welcome to new readers

There are 169 new address masters in a box at the *Quick Strokes* office, representing not quite all the queries that have come in from readers of InfoWorld and Byte. Some enquirers have already subscribed and those addresses have gone into a priority file. All have had copies of QS 32, with the explanation that QS is quarterly and that the subscription price is \$10.60 in California and \$10.00 elsewhere.

Back issues are the cover price as long as the volume is current. Earlier volumes are \$2 each or \$2.12 in California, and that now applies to Volumes 1 to IX. Two of the volumes consist of three issues only.

Subscriptions are due and payable in advance of the June 20 mailing of No. 1 of a volume. QS is wholly devoted to the Dvorak arrangement of characters on keyboards and the movement that supports it.

## "Harass your vendor" seems to be the answer

The photographic diagram on page 3 of this issue of *Quick Strokes* shows the prevalent variant of the Dvorak arrangement. The local dealer or branch of a manufacturer may or may not recognize it.

Any clerk should be able, however, to give you the address and telephone number for the manufacturer's corporate headquarters. Address your query to the public relations department.

## The DIF — what is it and why is it?

The Dvorak International Federation was formed in 1978 on the initiative of Brad J. Lessley, who was then a doctoral candidate at Oregon State University, Corvallis, and with the collaboration of faculty from OSC and other institutions, notably Portland Community College, and also that of state government agencies, notably the Executive Department, the Public Employees Retirement System, and the Department of Revenue.

"No pussyfooting!" was the attitude from the first. The arrangement that alert word-processing managers were using was like the classic Dvorak arrangement through the alphabet and the most frequent of the punctuation marks — therefore a Dvorak federation was in order. The movement already had connections in Australia and Switzerland — therefore the federation was international.

DIF is incorporated under Oregon law as a nonprofit educational organization. It is negotiating with the federal Internal Revenue Service for tax-deductible status.

It is in the interest of everyone who uses a Dvorak arrangement or who thinks he might want to use one at any time, to promote the spread of Dvorak applications. The market does not have to boom to keep the manufacturing community friendly; it must, however keep moving. If it doesn't, we shall find the equipment and the instruction harder to get instead of easier and easier.

The Dvorak federation and its organ, *Quick Strokes*, are the medium. President, Virginia deG. Russell, 11 Pearl St., Brandon, Vt 05733, for organizational directives, a speaker for a meeting, and the like. Secretary, Barbara Blackburn, 4895 Pennsylvania

SE, Salem, OR 97301, for membership applications, dues payments, contributions. *Quick Strokes* or Philip Davis or Harriet Davis, P.O. Box 643, West Sacramento, CA 95691. Phones: Russell, 802-247-6020; Blackburn, 503-581-5203; Davis, 916-446-3377. These are home phones and may be answered with a "hello."

## Two skills in peaceable coexistence

Waldo T. Boyd, professional writer, of Geyserville, California, has changed his equipment several times in the last fifteen years, always clinging to a close variant of the Dvorak arrangement of characters on the keyboard.

His latest is a TRS-80 personal computer. Recently, he forgot to put in the disk that converts the arrangement to Dvorak. For about twenty minutes, he reports, he wrote as usual without realizing any discrepancy. Nothing about the display on his screen tipped him off.

Then, "For heaven's sake!" he must have said, realization came. He inserted the Dvorak disk and did the rest of his stint the right way — on a Dvorak arrangement.

The evidence is anecdotal, and yet, doesn't it give the experimental psychologists something to chew on?

## Massachusetts DIF leader talks to personnel managers

One section of the International Personnel Managers' Association heard a report on Dvorak keying and clerical productivity in the course of their recent convention in Hartford, Connecticut. The speaker, Dick Land, a Harvard University faculty member and longtime participant in the Dvorak movement, has reported to *Quick Strokes* that the rather small group of listeners was attentive and seemed interested.

The January, 1982, issue of *Hotline*, an internal house organ of Exxon Office Systems, carries a letter from Barbara Blackburn, with a portrait photo and a facsimile of her Record Certificate from Guinness Superlatives and with an editorial note referring the reader to page 498 of the 1982 edition of the Guinness Book of World Records.

## Next Quick Strokes, September

To make sure that you do get the next issues of *Quick Strokes*, subscribe now or join DIF. We know we have to mail out many samples in order to secure one subscription, \$10.60 in California, \$10 elsewhere, but we cannot guarantee to do so for everybody.

In our next, September, 1982, issue, we hope to deal with Professor Montgomery's article in *Computer*, the organ of the Computer Society of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, with "Handi-Keys", R. S. McCuiston's program for computer analysis of frequencies of strokes and sequences, with the Videx Dvorak EPROM, and with the trademarked "Magic Keyboard" from Southern California Research Group.

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